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Written on FEBRUARY 14, 2012 AT 8:03 AM by PROSS

Are You Ready for the PFA?

Filed under UNCATEGORIZED

{3 COMMENTS}

By Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Jeremy D. Jones, Branch Health Clinic Parris Island, S.C.

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Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Jeremy D. Jones assists Sailors in physical training.

Considering that the Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) is right around the corner, “why stay physically fit?” is an easy question for us Navy folk to answer. For one, our fitness levels can affect how valuable we are to the Navy. Three PFA failures and we become less valuable or a risk to the Navy for retention. In my opinion, Sailors are the Navy’s most valuable asset. Knowing this, every Sailor has the responsibility to keep themselves in good physical condition. Secondly, the benefits from being physically fit are amazing, such as less anxiety when it

comes to PFA time, lower blood pressure, more energy, increased brain activity, reduced risk of heart disease, increased work performance, decreased likelihood of developing diabetes, and better control and maintenance of body weight. These benefits are worth the 30 minutes to an hour spent in the gym a few days each week.

Personally, I do not wait until the 10-week notice to be posted to start preparing for the PFA. Waiting until the notice is only going to put added stress on you and your body when it comes to preparing for the pushups, sit-ups, and 1.5 mile run. The best way to stay prepared is to always be prepared. What I mean by always being prepared is if your commanding officer asks you to take the PFA tomorrow you would be able to pass it with no problem. If you are unable to pass the PFA on a moment’s notice then you need to rethink your preparation strategy. Here are a few pointers to help you better prepare for the PFA:

1. Make your mind up that you want to be healthy and physically fit. This is the single most important step to beginning the journey of increasing your health and fitness levels. For example, if you are okay with being unhealthy and failing the PFA, then you have a greater chance of continuing to be unhealthy and failing the PFA. However, if you make your mind up that you want to be healthy and physically fit your chance of success at bettering your health and fitness increases tremendously.
2. Conduct a self-assessment. This will include analyzing your previous PFA statistics to determine where you need the most work, weighing yourself, and doing a mock PFA. Once

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you have a baseline of your current abilities you will be able to move on to the next step of challenging yourself.

3. Challenge yourself. This will include setting individual goals that are difficult, but not unattainable. Each new challenge that is overcome will allow for the most growth mentally and physically. Always remember that growth depends on your ability to challenge yourself and learn from your mistakes.
4. Look for support. Support is everywhere in the Navy and in your life if you are willing to look for it. Surround yourself with people who value fitness and that are willing to help you on your journey. These people may include family members, friends, co-workers, command fitness leaders, or anyone who values a healthy lifestyle.

The above steps are an excellent way to prepare for the PFA. I have personally lived by these four steps since joining the military four years ago, which has resulted in never getting less than an outstanding on the test. I also try to encourage Sailors within my department at Branch Health Clinic Parris Island, S.C. to follow the above steps. One Sailor within my department received his first outstanding on his PFA after being in the Navy for over 14 years with these steps. I cannot guarantee results as good as the above Sailor's, but I can guarantee improvement if you are willing to assess yourself, challenge yourself and look for support. Good luck shipmates!

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Jeremy Jones
Hello, this is HM3 Jones. Thanks for all of the shares everyone! I hope that this article has been of some benefit to you.

V/R

Jeremy D. Jones, MS, NASM-CPT-FNS

John Cahill
Jeremy — great article. I think you and I had some Leadership classes at SWC.

John Cahill

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